



The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 17 February 1968



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DAILY BRIEF
17 FEBRUARY 1968

1. South Vietnam

Enemy tanks were sighted some five miles north of Con Thien yesterday. This is the first time tanks have been seen in this sector. Air strikes and artillery fire were ordered up, but the results are not yet known.

The Khe Sanh area has been quiet overnight except for occasional mortar fire.

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2. Communist China

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3. Soviet Union

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4. Soviet Union

Ambassador Thompson is not at all optimistic that Moscow will allow any of its major newspapers or magazines to publish an interview with President Johnson to reciprocate for the recent Kosygin interview in Life.

5. Korea

Press reaction in Seoul to the Vance mission has largely focused on the US refusal to agree on specific measures to cope with future North Korean provocations. A spokesman for the government party has called the communiqué inadequate and said that South Korea must rely on its own "independent" defense system. The opposition party has dismissed the communiqué as meaningless.

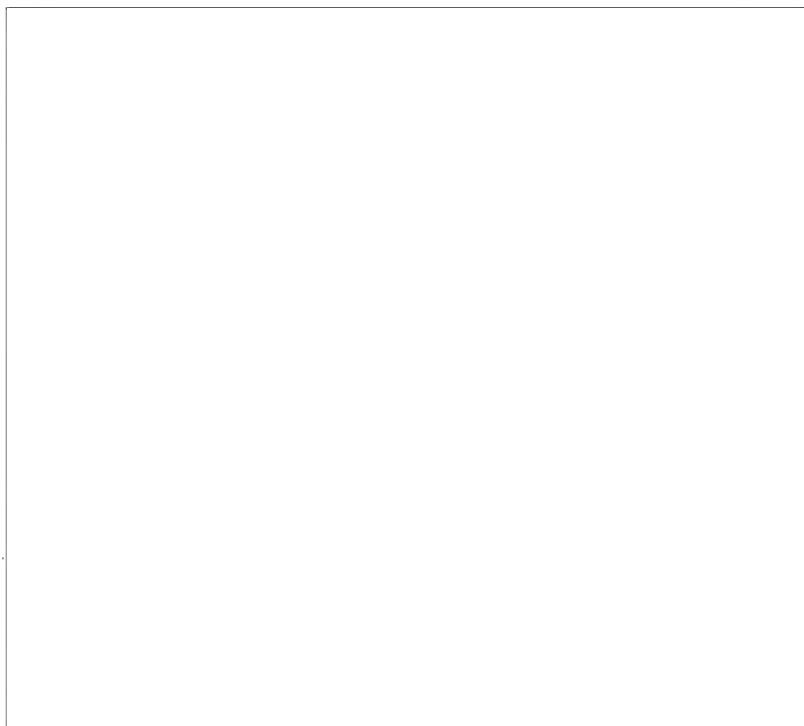
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6. Communist China

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7. Pakistan

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8. West Berlin

The sponsors of the anti-Vietnam "congress" in Berlin on Sunday seem determined to have a fight. They are telling the participants to wear protective hats and coats and to use flag-staffs and placard poles as weapons against the police. The amount of violence could well exceed earlier predictions.

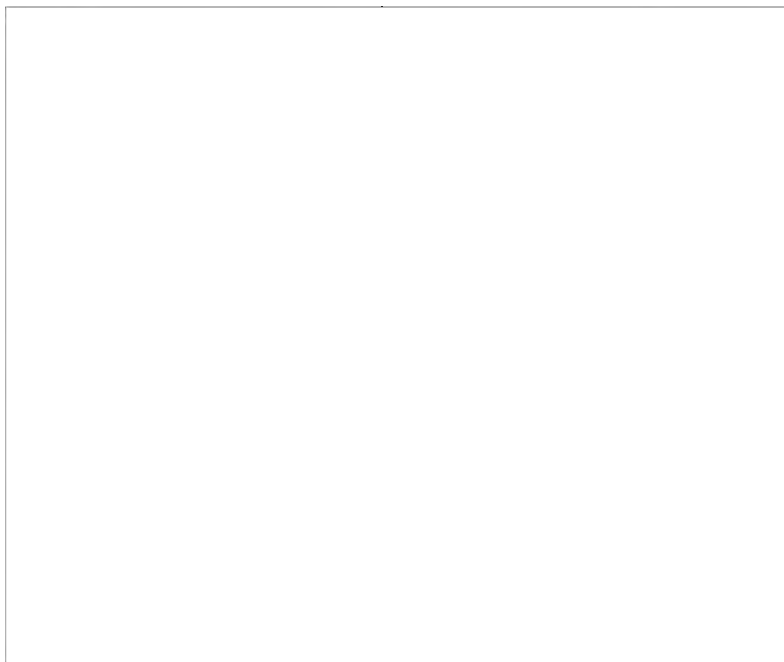
The principal target is the US headquarters complex. Although more than 5,000 demonstrators may turn out, US officials believe that the police should be able to keep the full weight of the demonstrators from reaching the headquarters area.

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9. West Germany

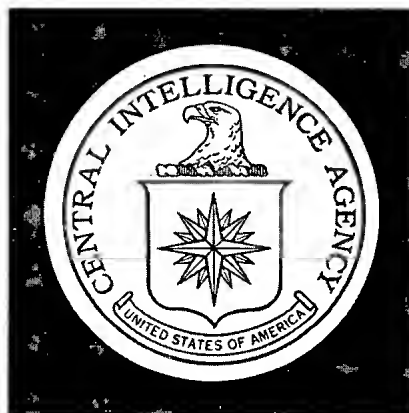
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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

Special Daily Report on North Vietnam



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17 February 1968

Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
for the President's Eyes Only

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I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

Propaganda Roundup: A series of recent communiqués from several of the Viet Cong regional commands reviewing the military situation since the Tet offensive have indicated that the "victories" achieved in the past two weeks have only laid the groundwork for a more intensive period of fighting ahead.

Separate broadcasts carrying communiqués from the Communist commands in the highlands and in the delta detailed the victories recorded in the offensive and claimed that they produced "favorable conditions" for the advance toward "still greater victories." An editorial in the Hanoi party daily, broadcast on 16 February, employed the same theme. It claimed that the recent fighting had "smashed the enemy's grip on the countryside and loosed allied control in the urban areas." These successes, it claimed, have tipped the balance of forces in favor of the Communists and created favorable conditions for their "advancing toward total victory."

While promising new and greater victories, current Communist propaganda is also pointing out that such successes will be costly. On 14 February, the Liberation Radio, in analyzing the "successful struggle" in Saigon, pointed out that "no fierce difficulties, hardships, or sacrifices" can slacken the "surging thrust" of the people of the capital city. Other statements, employing the well-worn Communist theme--the greater its defeat the more fiercely the US will struggle--have warned of increased difficulties but have guaranteed that perseverance in duty will reap victory.

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Release of US Fliers: In its announcement of the release of the three US pilots which was broadcast yesterday, Hanoi specifically pointed out that the men had been freed through the auspices of the Vietnam Peace Committee, and not of any government or international organization. A release through government or international channels might have implied that the fliers had prisoner of war status under international agreement and were not "war criminals" as Hanoi contends.

The announcement also quoted the secretary of the peace committee as claiming that the release of the three men was a demonstration of North Vietnam's "lenient" and humanitarian policy. He asked the two US peace workers to tell their associates in the US that the work of the antiwar movement is greatly appreciated by the North Vietnamese people.

One of the Americans was quoted by Hanoi radio as saying his "basic needs" had been provided for during detention. He said he was happy to be going home and expressed gratitude for North Vietnam's "lenient policy."

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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL
ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

Nothing significant to report at this time.

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